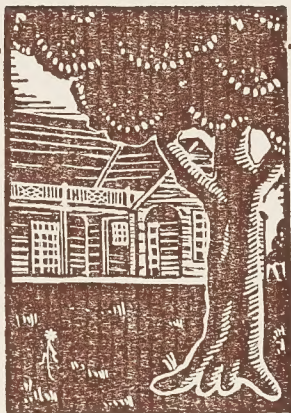


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MIDDLEBURY  
COLLEGE  
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Middlebury, Vermont, May, 1933



THE WRITERS' CONFERENCE  
at BREAD LOAF, VERMONT

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MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE BULLETIN

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The Bread Loaf Writers'  
Conference

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# Bread Loaf Writers' Conference

Conducted by

MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE

At Bread Loaf Inn

August 16---August 30, 1933

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## STAFF

EDITH MIRRIELES	-	-	-	-	-	<i>The Short Story</i>
BERNARD DE VOTO	-	-	-	-	-	<i>The Novel</i>
JANET AYER FAIRBANK	-	-	-	-	-	<i>Consultant in Fiction</i>
WALTER PRICHARD EATON	-	-	-	-	-	<i>Drama, Essays and Articles, Journalism</i>
ROBERT HILLYER	-	-	-	-	-	<i>Verse</i>
GORHAM B. MUNSON	-	-	-	-	-	<i>Criticism</i>
RAYMOND EVERETT	-	-	-	-	-	<i>Publication Adviser</i>
THEODORE MORRISON	-	-	-	-	-	<i>Director</i>

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## PURPOSE OF THE CONFERENCE

PEOPLE who desire to write are many; competent literary advisers are few. And those who could profit by intelligent, candid criticism often fail to meet those who are qualified to give it. Every year during the last two weeks of August the Bread Loaf Writers' Conference tries to bring together men and women who desire literary advice, professional, practical, educated, honest, and men and women who by experience and achievement are able to provide it. At Bread Loaf they meet under the most favorable conditions, not only provided with buildings convenient for the animated discussion of literary problems, but sharing together for a fortnight the simple and natural life

of a picturesque country Inn situated high up in the main range of the Green Mountains in one of the most strikingly beautiful regions of Vermont.

The Conference is conducted by Middlebury College. It has profited by the help of well-known publishers and editors, and some of the most eminent men and women of letters in the country have either served on its staff or given talks or readings as visitors to its annual sessions. The Conference was founded in 1926 by John Farrar, then editor of the *Bookman*, now Vice-President of Farrar & Rinehart, Inc., New York Publishers. It has numbered among its visitors and helpers Robert Frost, Dorothy Canfield Fisher, and Willa Cather, to name but a few of many who might be cited. But while it enjoys the aid of publishers, editors, and literary people, it counts among its definite advantages the fact that it is conducted and sponsored solely by Middlebury College, feeling that this is a valuable warrant of the honesty and independence of its advice. Of its friendliness and informality, each annual session has given new evidence.

The program of the Conference is not academic. It addresses itself wholly to the problems of writers, and endeavors to help its members not only to advance in excellence in the many branches of the literary art, but also to make progress in writing as a profession. Those in charge of the Conference are aware that in one sense, it is impossible to teach anyone to write. Without some original gift or bent, instruction is largely unprofitable. But many intelligent men and women desire to express their experience in one or another of the literary forms, and are capable of profiting by the advice and guidance of those who have travelled the road before them. Such men and women can be both helped and stimulated.



Sometimes they mistake the form of writing for which they are best qualified, and a well-judged word will enable them to make progress much more rapidly. Sometimes they lack the power of self-criticism, and need an experienced eye to point out to them characteristic faults or misapprehensions. Or it may be professional information that they need, information about the mechanics of publishing, about the relations of authors and editors, about the normal returns for successful literary production, or other practical problems of the trade. The Bread Loaf Writers' Conference tries to present a program as adaptable, as inclusive, and as well balanced as possible. It would like to have a useful word for every individual problem presented to it, and its staff is so variously experienced, its procedure so informal, that it can go very far toward fulfilling this ideal.

## THE PROGRAM

### *Background Talks*

The program falls into four main divisions.

Mornings at the Conference are largely given over to background talks by members of the staff on the principal branches of writing. In the past, these talks have been devoted to the novel, the drama, the short story, verse, essays and articles, and criticism, with sometimes a series of talks on prose style and certain recognized methods of mastering it. The traditional program of background talks will be maintained this year, but will be enlarged and improved by the introduction of new topics and added emphasis on others. The possibilities of article writing as a definite source of literary income will be more thoroughly treated; the characteristics of

a good article, the range of markets, the requirements of editors, will be more seriously considered. Journalism and feature-writing will also receive more detailed attention.

An important innovation will be the introduction of systematic talks on rights, contracts, the relations of authors and editors, the marketing of manuscripts through agencies, and other practical problems, by the Publication Adviser, a post newly created to add to the value and effectiveness of the Writers' Conference.

### *Round-Table Discussions*

A part of the afternoon is usually devoted to a joint discussion by the staff and the members of the Conference of some problem, either practical or literary, which writers commonly encounter. The object of the round-table sessions is to give the members of the Conference an opportunity to put their own questions informally and to enter into friendly and direct discussion with members of the staff. The more spirited such discussions become, the more useful we consider them to be.

### *Personal Interviews*

One of the most important features of the Writers' Conference, perhaps the most important of all, is the opportunity extended to every man or woman enrolled in it to discuss personally with one or more members of the staff his individual problems and difficulties, to receive individual advice, and to profit by detailed criticism of manuscript. It is in such interviews that criticism which is independent and candid, yet friendly and understanding, reaches its highest value; and for such criticism Bread Loaf is widely known.

### *Evening Lectures*

Evenings at Bread Loaf are usually given over to a talk or reading by some member of the staff or by a distinguished visitor. Many eminent novelists, poets, editors, playwrights, critics, and short story writers have visited the Writers' Conference to give evening talks; but it has been our experience that no evenings are more enjoyable than those in which a member of the staff presides.

### *Variety of Resources*

The staff of the Writers' Conference is a versatile body. Whatever kind of writing or whatever individual problem may concern men and women who contemplate coming to Bread Loaf, it is unlikely that some member of the staff cannot give an experienced word about it. Collectively the published writings of the members of the staff include novels, short stories, biographies, works of criticism, essays and nature studies, articles, stories for young children and for boys in the teens, reviews of music, books, and plays, narrative and lyric verse, and newspaper features. Most of the members of the staff have not only distinguished themselves by recognized achievements in writing, but are also experienced in the art of teaching, and so are able to communicate efficiently to others what they have learned themselves.

### *Fiction*

*The Short Story.* Work in the short story will be under the direction of Miss Edith Mirrieles, known as one of the most skillful teachers in the country of this branch of writing. Miss Mirrieles is an Associate Pro-



tessor of English at Stanford University. Her own stories have found a place in leading magazines and in anthologies. Her two books, *Writing Short Stories* and *Significant Contemporary Stories*, are recognized as among the most valuable of their kind. Her wit, admirable judgment, and friendliness have endeared her to the members of the Writers' Conference in previous years.

*The Novel.* Bernard De Voto, novelist, short story writer, contributor of widely discussed articles to leading magazines, critic of Mark Twain and student of American literature and history, will have charge of work in the novel. Mr. De Voto's own novels, *The Crooked Mile*, *The Chariot of Fire*, *The House of Sun-Goes-Down*, are vivid reconstructions of characteristic and striking aspects of American life and history. His *Mark Twain's America*, recognized as a brilliant piece of research, has reawakened vital controversy about the foundations of American life and has powerfully enlivened and freshened contemporary criticism. Born in Utah, Mr. De Voto has found New England and particularly the Harvard College library congenial to his work in recent years. He is one of the less conventional and more stimulating younger members of the Harvard teaching staff, and his seminar in writing has given him constant experience in dealing with literary problems.

*Consultant in Fiction.* The Conference is fortunate to be able to announce that Janet Ayer Fairbank (Mrs. Kellogg Fairbank) will serve on the staff this year for one week, acting as a special consultant in fiction to supplement the work both in the novel and the short story. Mrs. Fairbank's energetic and versatile career has distinguished her in social, political, and literary



activity. Her home is in Chicago, where she has been appointed a trustee and member of the Executive Committee of the Chicago World's Fair for 1933. Her published volumes include *In Town*, *The Courtlands of Washington Square*, *The Smiths*, *Idle Hands* (short stories), *The Lion's Den*, and finally, in the fall of last year, *The Bright Land*, a novel of ambitious scale on the period from Jackson's presidency through the Civil War and the years of reconstruction. Mrs. Fairbank is the sister of Margaret Ayer Barnes, Pulitzer Prize winner in the novel, and her connections with men and women prominent in politics, in writing, in the theatre, and in the fine arts are wide and active.

### Poetry

Robert Hillyer will be in charge of the work of the Conference in verse. Mr. Hillyer is the author of nine volumes of poems and poetical translations, including versions in English of parts of the *Egyptian Book of the Dead*. He has been recognized as one of the masters of beauty in contemporary lyric poetry in this country, and his three latest volumes, *The Halt in the Garden*, which appeared in England with an Introduction by Arthur Machen, *The Seventh Hill*, and *The Gates of the Compass*, have shown this mastery ripening and enlarging itself. Mr. Hillyer is also an associate professor of English in Harvard University, where he gives the course in advanced composition made famous by Barrett Wendell and L. B. R. Briggs, and a course in the history and principles of English versification. He is also the author of a novel, *Riverhead*, which appeared in 1932.

The Director of the Conference, Theodore Morrison,

formerly an associate editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, author of a narrative poem, *The Serpent in the Cloud*, and a contributor of poems to the *Atlantic* and other magazines, will also be glad to consult with those interested in the writing of verse.

### *Essays, Articles, Feature-Writing*

Work in essays, articles, feature-writing, and journalism will be under the direction of one of the most versatile members of the staff. Walter Prichard Eaton is perhaps best known as a dramatic critic and authority on the theatre. But since he began his career as a reporter in Boston, transferring presently to New York, he has served his turn at nearly every branch of literary expression. His essays and nature studies, collected in such volumes as *Green Trails and Upland Pastures* or *Penguin Persons and Peppermints*, are the delight of those who have a taste for style and for discerning or humorous observation. He has reviewed everything from plays and music to books on old china. He has written a series of Boy Scout books, and last year published a volume for small children, *Adventures of the Duck Family*. He is the author of many short stories, and has brought out a volume of poems. He is an active and various writer of articles in many magazines and newspaper supplements. He recently published a volume entitled *Everybody's Garden*, and is in much demand as a speaker at garden clubs. Few men are so capable of giving sound, experienced, and practical advice to writers, and on such a variety of topics.

### *Drama*

Mr. Eaton will also have charge of work in the drama. His qualifications for this post are known to everyone

familiar with the American theatre. It is sufficient to record here that Mr. Eaton has supervised the publicity of important New York productions on the road; that he is the author of two valuable books, *The Actor's Heritage*, and *Drama in English*; and that he has served several times on the committee to determine the winning play for the annual Pulitzer Prize in the drama.

### *Criticism*

Among the features of the Conference which those who have made repeated visits to Bread Loaf remember most appreciatively, the lectures of Gorham B. Munson have assumed a prominent place. Mr. Munson advises and consults with those interested in reviewing or in more ambitious forms of criticism. He also discusses the qualifications which a literary critic must possess, and defines the various aims which criticism may set for itself. And he applies himself to the critical exposition of important contemporary authors and movements.

He himself is experienced as a biographer, critic, and magazine editor. In the early twenties, he helped to found and edit *Secession*. Since then his writings have appeared in the *Bookman*, *Dial*, *New Republic*, *Little Review*, *Criterion*, and other periodicals. He is the American representative of the *New English Weekly*. He is the author of several volumes, biographical or critical: *Waldo Frank: A Study*; *Robert Frost: A Study in Sensibility and Good Sense*; *Destinations*; *Style and Form in American Prose*; *The Dilemma of the Liberated*. He is now engaged in preparing a volume on Thoreau.

### *The Publication Adviser*

We feel that we perform our best service for those who come to Bread Loaf when we help them to write



better and when we give independent, honest, and friendly criticism. We consider that the success of the Conference is not to be measured by the amount of material immediately and directly published as a result of attendance at one of its annual sessions. But we have a natural interest in the practical success of all those who come to us for aid, and we try to promote it. We believe that writing can only be sane if it is designed for an audience, and only successful if ultimately it reaches one. It is a part of our regular purpose and plan to provide as much information and guidance as we can in such practical matters as the relations of authors and editors, the usual provisions of contracts, and the best ways of making professional progress. This year, in order to treat such problems as systematically and helpfully as possible, and in order to increase the efficiency and the scope of our service on the purely practical side, we shall entrust this part of our work to expert professional hands. The Publication Adviser, a new member of the staff, will be present at the Conference for one week. He will not only speak on the problems of getting literary wares to the market, but will read promising manuscripts and confer with the authors about the possibilities of publication which they may present.

The Publication Adviser will be Raymond Everett, General Manager of the New York office of Curtis Brown, Ltd., literary agents. After graduating from Yale, Mr. Everett studied at Oxford, then returned to this country to work in a bookshop. He entered the firm of Harcourt, Brace & Co., where he remained for six years and gained experience in selling, advertising, publicity, and finally as editor. Curtis Brown, Ltd., is the largest literary agency dealing with rights. It maintains offices in London, Paris, Berlin, and New York,

and special connections in Italy, Holland, Hungary, and other countries. Mr. Everett is abundantly qualified by experience for the post he will assume at Bread Loaf.

### *Visiting Speakers*

Visiting speakers at the Conference this year will include Dorothy Canfield Fisher, who will describe how the idea of one of her works of fiction first occurred to her, how it took form, and how she developed it to the completed book; John Farrar, Vice-President of Farrar & Rinehart, Inc., and founder of the Conference; Edward Weeks, editor of the Atlantic Monthly Press, lecturer, and writer; Lee Simonson, play producer and a director of the Theatre Guild.

### *Beginners at Bread Loaf*

The program of the Writers' Conference is naturally planned for men and women who have made some degree of advancement in the understanding and practice of one or more of the principal forms of writing. Many of those who enroll have already made considerable professional progress in fiction, verse, or article writing. It is not necessary, however, to give evidence of published work for admission to the Conference. Some of our most successful effort has been devoted to those who have written obscurely by themselves, or with the encouragement of friends, and have at last come to Bread Loaf for the advice and criticism which they have been unable to find elsewhere. Sometimes it is necessary to give an adverse judgment, and to say that in our opinion manuscript submitted to us is without definite promise. But our hope is to give aid to everyone who presents a problem to us, whether the need is to

improve the treatment of the characters in a novel, to learn more of the art of versification, or to shape a mass of family papers into a satisfactory biographical study.

Outright beginners have frequently profited by the Conference, and we are glad to welcome those who realize their own inexperience if they are willing to accept the consequences of it. At this year's Conference, the Director will be prepared to give, if it seems advisable, a number of talks which may be of general usefulness, but which will have beginners particularly in mind. Such talks would discuss fundamental matters in the mastery of style and of the means of expression, and would try to suggest useful methods of self-training.

### THE LOCATION

The Writers' Conference is housed in Bread Loaf Inn, so called because it is situated near Bread Loaf Mountain. It is a picturesque old hotel in one of the most beautiful sections of the Green Mountains, on the border of the great Battell Forest of over 30,000 acres of unbroken woodland. The Inn and cottages form a community high up in the mountains, far from any village, insuring quiet and seclusion, but easily accessible over good automobile roads.

### RECREATION

The region about Bread Loaf offers unusual opportunities for outdoor recreation. Tennis, horseback-riding, hikes over the Long Trail, swimming at Lake Dunmore, and golf at Middlebury and Brandon will enable students to combine recreation with work in a delightful manner.



## REGISTRATION

Admission to the Conference involves no specific qualifications, but is subject to the approval of the Director. Application blanks will be sent upon request. Address all correspondence, except correspondence concerning rooms, to Assistant Dean H. G. Owen, Storrs Avenue, Middlebury, Vermont. Correspondence concerning rooms should be conducted with Mrs. Pamela Powell, Secretary of the Summer Session, Middlebury, Vermont.

The fees for the Conference this year have been substantially reduced. A charge of \$100 will cover cost of tuition and board at Bread Loaf for the period of the Conference, and all incidental expenses of registration except room rent. The Conference begins with the noon meal on August 16 and ends after breakfast August 30. Bread Loaf Inn, the home of the Conference, is situated twelve miles from Middlebury. Free transportation will be furnished from Middlebury to Bread Loaf on August 16 and from Bread Loaf to Middlebury on August 30, but free transportation cannot be provided except on the dates mentioned.

Rooms may be had from \$8 to \$42 for the period of the Conference. Further information will be furnished by Mrs. Powell. A \$20 fee, applicable to the charge for board and tuition, must be deposited with Mrs. Powell on or before August 1 in order to secure accommodations. Because of the shortness of the Conference and the expense of conducting it, no refunds may be granted, nor may students enroll for less than the entire session. Guests of Bread Loaf Inn are welcome to attend evening functions of the Conference without charge, and regular daily lectures or discussions on payment of \$1.00 an hour, \$3.00 a day, or \$15.00 a week. *These charges do not permit criticism of manuscript or private consultation with staff members.* Payment for room, tuition, and board must be made at the time of registration *in the form of travelers checks.*

